

BEE GEES MAY GIVE YOU 'WORLD' NEXT!



BARRY GIBB was sitting on the floor whitening a pair of boots, while Maurice sat playing "Mornintown Ride" on the guitar. Their brother Robin was having his hair combed by a driver called Jim, and Colin Petersen and Vince Melouney were discussing what clothes to wear. That was the scene in the Bee Gees dressing room at BBC-TV's Lime Grove studio when I popped round to see them recently.

Also present were the group's manager Robert Stigwood (who was sitting in the corner reading a teeny-bopper magazine) and a covey of road managers, personal assistants and drivers. The group was preparing to tape "Massachusetts" for a "Top Of The Pops" programme.

All of them are more delighted with the success of "Massachusetts" than they were when their first hit "New York Mining Disaster" entered the chart—and that's not just because "Massachusetts" is selling better. "It's simply that this is our first really big British hit," explained Barry, knocking his jar of whitening over. "Wouldn't it be nice if we got to No. 1?"

The others nodded in agreement. Maurice looked up from his guitar. "We've just finished a song called 'World' which will probably be our next single." The group intends that the public will hear the song for the first time when they play at the Saville Theatre, next month.

Excited

"We're all very excited about the Saville show," continued Barry wiping up the mess he had made. "It's now beginning to take shape and it's really going to be something that people have never seen before."

The BEE GEES (l. to r.): MAURICE, BARRY and ROBIN GIBB, COLIN PETERSEN and VINCE MELOUNEY.

By NORRIE DRUMMOND

Manager Stigwood dropped his magazine and suggested we all adjourn to the restaurant for refreshments.

Over a plate of spaghetti, Barry tried to explain to me the success of the Bee Gees. "There are a few reasons," he began. "Firstly I think we give the public melodies. And secondly we don't attempt to preach at anyone."

There are so many groups which try to change the world. We, I think, are simply a pop group which writes all its own songs. We write songs about people and situations—we tell stories in our songs but we don't give sermons."

How come?

How was it, I asked Barry, that someone like himself who was just 21 had such an awareness of life. "I've no idea," he confessed. "I assume that some people have it and others don't. I've always been interested in people and I suppose that helps. Some people are sensitive and sentimental while others aren't, it's the same type of thing. "I don't think it's necessarily because we've seen more than some people our age. It's more a case of being interested in the other bloke—a sort of understanding if you like."

The conversation rolled round to the Bee Gees compositions. Was Barry happy with the recordings of their songs made by other artists, I enquired.

"To be honest, Norrie, not really. I think every songwriter must feel as we do, but somehow no one who has recorded one of our numbers has made as good a job as we had hoped. When you write a song you have an idea of how it should be sung but it doesn't work out that way if someone else records it."

"No one so far has been able to get the proper feel of a song. Maybe in time we'll come to accept that this is the way it's got to be. Playwrights must feel the same way I suppose when they see an actor portraying the characters they have created."

Despite the fact that several artists have recorded very beautiful Bee Gees' songs, no one has yet had a hit with one, so there may be something in what Barry says.

Clothes

The conversation changed to the more light-hearted subject of clothes. In the past week the group has been widely criticised for the outrageous clothes they wore on TV. Recently several magazines described them as "buffoons"—a word which amuses them immensely.

"We tried to wear something a little bit different," said Barry smiling. "But it didn't work and so we'll now try something else."

In what ways have their lives changed in the past six months I asked.

"Hugely," Barry answered immediately. "After all, when we arrived in London, we had nothing. We were unknown. We had no recording contract and no work."

"We could have been sleeping on park benches now but fortunately everything turned out well—much better than we had ever hoped."

It's our gain too that the Bee Gees decided to come and settle here. They are a group with an enormous talent and I feel that a long and exciting career is just beginning for them.